

April 25, 2016

STAY HEALTHY THIS SUMMER BY PROTECTING YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES FROM MOSQUITOES



Contact: Ryan Mims
HealthyOkaloosaPIO@flhealth.gov
(850) 833-9240 ext. 2162
Cell: (850) 420-2198

Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. — As late spring and summer approaches, the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) cautions to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can carry harmful viruses that cause serious illness in people. DOH-Okaloosa has an established partnership with the Okaloosa County Mosquito Control and works collaboratively to help protect and promote the health of residents and visitors. There are routine steps all people should take to reduce the possibly risk of mosquito bites.

"With the Zika virus prominently in the news, DOH-Okaloosa and Okaloosa County Mosquito Control continues to work closely together to educate the public on ways they can prevent any mosquito-borne illness," stated Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. "The easiest way to remember how you can help eliminate mosquito bites is to *Drain and Cover*."

DRAIN standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that are not being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER skin with clothing or repellent.

- Clothing - Wear shoes, socks and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- Repellent - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
- Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
- Do not apply repellent to children younger than two months old. Use mosquito netting instead.

COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

"Mosquitoes only need about a bottle cap or a magnolia leaf full of water to reproduce and can bite at all times of the day," continued Dr. Chapman. "Whether you are around the house or

traveling, staying consistent on protecting yourself and family with these simple steps is important.”

For more information on mosquito-borne and other insect-borne diseases, visit www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases.

For the more information about local mosquito control efforts or to access the mosquito spraying schedule for Okaloosa County, visit www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/pw/environmental/mosquito-control.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

###